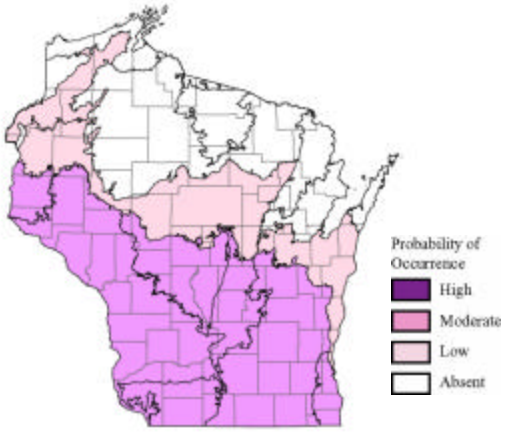
Prairie Vole (*Microtus ochrogaster*)

Species Assessme nt Scores*

State rarity:	4
State threats:	3
State population trend:	4
Global abundance:	3
Global distribution:	4
Global threats:	3
Global population trend:	3
Mean Risk Score:	3.4
Area of importance:	2

* Please see the Description of Vertebrate Species Summaries (Section 3.1.1) for definitions of criteria and scores.



Ecological Landscape Associations
Please note that this is not a range map. Shading does not imply that the species is present throughout the Landscape, but represents the probability that the species occurs somewhere in the Landscape.

Landscape -community Combinations of Highest Ecological Priority

Ecological Landscape	Community
Central Sand Hills	Dry prairie
Central Sand Hills	Sand prairie
Central Sand Plains	Dry prairie
Central Sand Plains	Dry -mesic prairie
Central Sand Plains	Oak barrens
Central Sand Plains	Sand prairie
Central Sand Plains	Surrogate Grasslands
Southeast Glacial Plains	Dry prairie
Southeast Glacial Plains	Dry -mesic prairie
Southeast Glacial Plains	Mesic prairie
Southeast Glacial Plains	Oak opening
Southeast Glacial Plains	Surrogate Grasslands
Southwest Savanna	Dry prairie
Southwest Savanna	Dry -mesic prairie
Southwest Savanna	Mesic prairie
Southwest Savanna	Oak opening
Southwest Savanna	Surrogate Grasslands
Western Coulee and Ridges	Dry prairie
Western Coulee and Ridges	Dry -mesic prairie
Western Coulee and Ridges	Oak barrens
Western Coulee and Ridges	Oak opening
Western Coulee and Ridges	Sand prairie
Western Coulee and Ridges	Surrogate Grasslands
Western Prairie	Dry prairie
Western Prairie	Dry -mesic prairie
Western Prairie	Mesic prairie
Western Prairie	Sand prairie
Western Prairie	Surrogate Grasslands

Threats and Issues

- As with many other small mammal species, more information is needed on habitat requirements, distribution, status, and effects of land uses and management practices to inform conservation efforts targeting this species.
- Severe overgrazing of pasture and grasslands is a threat to this species (Kostova *et al.* 2004).
- Exposure to chemicals (e.g., pesticides including diazinon) can negatively impact ecological relationships and reproduction in both herbivorous and omnivorous mammals; negative impacts on populations and community structure and function may persist longer than the chemicals persist in the environment (Sheffield and Lochmiller 2001).
- Competition from meadow voles limit prairie voles to drier grassland habitats where they co-occur.
- Loss and isolation of native prairie and grassland habitat due to a variety of factors including fire suppression, succession to forested communties, and invasion by both native and exotic shrubs (e.g., common buckthorn). In addition, fragmentation and loss of other habitat types used by praire voles including surrogate prairie grasslands and small grain and weedy agricultural fields are a threat to the species (Kaufman *et al.* 2000, Bock *et al.* 2002).

Priority Conservation Actions

- Protection, management, and restoration of additional existing and potential habitat areas throughout southeast Wisconsin is needed.
- Better information on distrubution, abundance, and population trends is needed to inform conservation efforts.
- Restore, manage, and protect dry and sand prairie and open barrens habitat in and near the Driftless Area of southwest Wisconsin; maintain some open sparse or weedy grasslands on light soils; encourage grassland restorations and surrogate grasslands that are not overly dense; and encourage small grain fields on private lands and when leasing public properties. Prairie restorations may provide good habitat during intital years of establishment, even on heavy soils when lighter soils are nearby.
- Land-use planning is needed that discourages houses and other development from replacing grasslands, old fields and low-impact agriculture.
- Overgrazing of grasslands should be addressed to provide additional high quality habitat for this species.
- Limit use of chemicals and pesticides, including diazinon, on grassland habitats because of their known negative affects on reproduction and other aspects of small mammal biology.
- Reintroductions may be warranted in restored grasslands.